129

# Ekonomska i ekohistorija

- M. Slukan Altić - THE FORMATION OF PROMENADES AND PARKS IN ZAGREB

## Ostali članci

# THE FORMATION OF PROMENADES AND PARKS IN ZAGREB AS A PART OF EUROPEAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

## OBLIKOVANJE ZAGREBAČKIH ŠETALIŠTA I PARKOVA KAO DIO EUOPSKOG KULTURNOG NASLIJEĐA

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#### Summary

As Croatia was a peripheral country of the Habsburg Monarchy, the industrial revolution did not have a significant impact on the urban development of Croatian towns until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the late appearance of industrialisation, the beginnings of the transformation of Zagreb at the time when its urban tissue was stretching out of the medieval walls during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, were reflected in the attempt of creating first public green areas. These processes developed under the strong influence of European trends and schools of urbanism whose handy work can be clearly read in all of the projects of the first green areas in Croatian towns and especially Zagreb as the capital of the Croatian and Slavonian Kingdom within the Habsburg Monarchy. This described the intertwining of the European influences as the result of numerous foreign engineers in Croatia as well as the fact that the majority of Zagreb's urbanism experts, architects and park experts of the time were educated in Vienna, Graz and Munich.

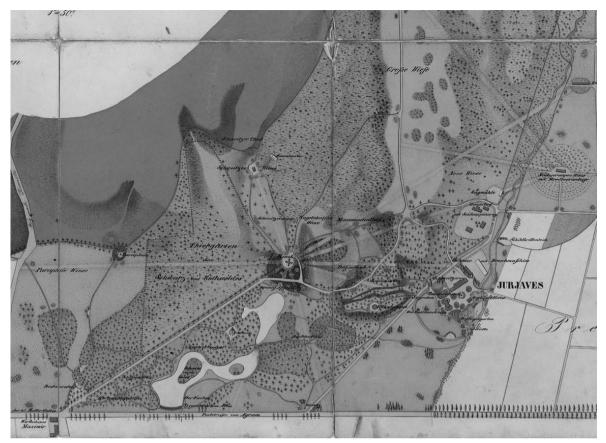
In this paper the physical shape, location and social role of Zagreb's green areas created during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century will be analysed and the historical contexts of their development will be observed as well as their European prototypes.

**Keywords:** Zagreb, 18 and 19 century, Habsburg Monarchy, urbana povijest, city promenade, public park

Ključne riječi: Zagreb, 18.-19. stoljeće, Habsburška Monarhija, urbana povijest, šetališta, parkovi

#### Maksimir Park as the first public park in Zagreb: from French geometry to English landscaped park

The oldest public green area in Zagreb is arranged outside the territory of the city, on land owned by the Zagreb diocese located east of the city, on the road leading from Zagreb to Budapest. Maksimir Park is named after its founder Bishop Maksimilijan Vrhovac (bishop from 1787-1827) who studied in Vienna where he was famous for the Viennese parks and fun fairs (Schönbrunn, Prater). Maksimir Park gained its first outlines in 1787, in a time when the *Englischer Garten* was



**Figure 1** Plan of Maksimir Park from 1846 on which can still be seen traces of the original French concept of the park

arranged in Munich and when architect Izidor Canavale was making a plan for organising an English style park in Laxenburg (in 1783). This chronological coincidence is no coincidence. Many of that time's Croatian builders, engineers and other leaders went to school in Munich and Vienna and, after their return to their homeland they implemented their knowledge and experience acquired in Central European cultural circles.

The land on which Maksimir was built was the bishop's hunting ground mostly wooded with oak trees and on which there was only one commercial building (*Meierhof*). After 1787, when Maksimilijan Vrhovac became Zagreb's bishop he decided to build a grand public park of about 400 hectares in the French style on this land. Although it was intended to be for all layers of society, due to its distant location, which meant visitors needed a half an hour's carriage ride from the city to reach it, the attraction was mainly used by the upper strata of the inhabitants.

Unfortunately, today we do not know of the original blueprints, which shaped the park (supposedly created by the design architect Würzburg), only written descriptions<sup>1</sup>. Its base is formed around a straight axis connecting the entrance to the park with the centre on an elevated point (this is the main avenue preserved to this day). In addition to the main axis, the central point of the park splits into a total of 10 trails, extending like a star to the periphery of the park (geometry in some places is slightly modified due to the unevenness of the terrain on which the park is laid out). For the purposes of arranging these paths some of the forest cover was cleared and to further illustrate the focus of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I. ZASCHE, Park Jurajves, Vienna, 1853. The publication includes description of the up-to-then park's history, park floor plan and panoramic views over the park. Croatian State Archive, Graphics Collection.

### *Ekonomska i ekohistorija* M. Slukan Altić - **THE FORMATION OF PROMENADES AND PARKS IN ZAGREB**

the park, at the intersection of all the paths a mound was created after the levelling of the earth and on this a gazebo was built in 1841. It is interesting that the design of Maksimir contains noticeable similarities with some parts of Canavale's drawing for Laxenburg from 1783.

In accordance with the traditions of the day, in the park from the beginning a menagerie was established and along the edge of the park there were several commercial buildings constructed (in particular one known as a silk factory). And so the landscaped park opened to the public in 1794 as one of the first public parks in southeast Europe. Unfortunately, after 1794 works on its further establishment ceased and the park became partially neglected (at the time of the Napoleonic wars the park became occupied by the military)<sup>2</sup>.

It remains unclear why Vrhovac decided to create the park in the French style at a time when English style landscaped parks had become the dominant style in horticulture throughout Europe. Vrhovac decision about designing the park and its geometrical structure is even stranger because it is known that his extensive library drew greatly upon the famous work of C.C.L. Hirschfeld's *»Theorie der Gartenkunst«* which promoted the abandonment of strict French style<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, even the flat terrain as befits French gardens, here is absent - Maksimir was laid out on uneven terrain suitable for English landscaped parks. So, Vrhovac for some unknown reasons insisted on a French style park. The answer to this query could be found in the very sensitive political situation in which Vrhovac found himself at a time when he worked on the layout of Maksimir Park. Namely, it is known that Vrhovac was a member of the Masonic Lodge which often met in parks (this was especially the case with the numbers of English private parks on the outskirts of Vienna). During the 1794-95 Jacobean conspiracy Vrhovac was himself accused of freemasonry and a link with the Hungarian Jacobins (from which he was eventually acquitted), and by insisting upon the French shape of his park probably wanted to express a distance from liberalism and reaffirm his commitment to the empirical grasp of the Habsburg Monarchy<sup>4</sup>.

At the beginning of 19th century, the greater influences of Romanticism and the English landscaping style could be felt in Croatia also, especially being accepted by the members of national reform<sup>5</sup>. So Vrhovac's successor, Bishop Alexander Alagović (1827-1837), dropped the original idea of forming Maksimir in the Baroque style and began work on forming meadows and aerating of the park. Alagović ordered the cutting of large forest complexes, designed a lake, planted a number of new forest and flower plantations and arranged meandering walkways. This created the basis for the formation of a landscape environment that was eventually masterfully designed and completed by Archbishop Juraj Haulik (1837-1867).

From 1837 to 1867 Haulik hired top experts from the Habsburg Monarchy to arrange Maksimir Park. For this construction he hired a group of experienced Austrian artists who had shaped the imperial gardens in Laxenburg, Hetzendorf and Schönbrunn, near Vienna. There was a group led by the excellent garden architect to the imperial gardens, Michael Sebastian Riedl<sup>6</sup>, who had worked on the project of designing the Maksimir Park. Alongside Riedl, on Maksimir, worked the chief

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In the inventory of the park's facilities put together after Vrhovac's death, only the inn built in 1794 is mentioned at the entrance to the park and the house owner's property, while all other planned facilities remained unrealized. Compare: Inventarium nobilium utensilium et requisitarum oeconomicorum i bonis croaticis Episcopatus zagrebiensis post mortem Maximiliani Verhovacz. Archive of the Zagreb Archdiocese.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> C.C.L. HIRSCHFELD, Theorie der Gartenkunst, Leipzig, 1779-1785, part I.IV

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> H. REINALTER (ed..), Jakobiner in Mitteleuropa: Probleme des Josephismus und des Jakobinerthums in der Habsburgischen Monarchie, Innsburck, 1977, pp. 274, 194, 299.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Hrvatski narodni preporod.the Croatian National Revival (1830-1845), political and cultural movement that fought for the promotion of national consciousness and culture.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Michael Sebastian Riedl (1786-1850) from 1789, supervisor of building and garden projects in Laxenburg and Schönbrunn.

gardener Franz Serafin Körbler<sup>7</sup>, architect Franz Schücht and Leopold Philipp who designed most of the buildings in the park, Joseph Käschmann<sup>8</sup>, Eduard Gurk<sup>9</sup>, Antun Dominik Fernkorn<sup>10</sup>, Anton Kothgasser<sup>11</sup> and architect Bartolomej Felbinger<sup>12</sup>. Over this period, Maksimir completely took on the characteristics of an English landscape park featuring a series of buildings in the Classicist-Romantic style (the portal of the main entrance in 1841, the gardener's house in 1847, the gazebo in 1843, the bishop's mansion in 1840, in 1842 the gamekeeper's house was built in a rustic style and a series of smaller buildings and romantic pavilions)<sup>13</sup>. The remains of the original French concept of the park remained only visible in the location of the main avenue and several radially oriented paths around the central part of the park with the gazebo. All other areas of the park and its paths were designed in a typically English style as a free-formed romantic park. Although intended for citizens and their socializing in nature, due to the distance from the city (until 1900 it was officially located outside of the city), its full recognition as a municipal public park came after 1891 when Maksimir was connected to the city's centre by the city's tramway.



**Figure 2** Entrance to Maksimir Park (drawing from 1861)

The formation of the Northern and Southern promenades – the first public walkways in the city As in numerous European towns, the appearance of the first public green area inside the city of Zagreb was related to the processes of the deconstruction of the city walls<sup>14</sup>. With the deconstruction of a part of the city's southern walls in 1812-13 Zagreb received its first promenade known as the Southern Promenade (today's Promenade of Josip Juraj Strossmayer). The promenade was formed along the outer side of the southern city walls (at that occasion the south town's gate, which lay a little in front of the line of the city walls was destroyed). Along the promenade an avenue of trees

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Franjo Serafin Körbler (1812-1864), until 1838 gardener in Schönbrunn and Laxenburg. In 1839 he came to Zagreb where he worked as the bishop's head gardener for 27 years.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Joseph Käschmann (1784-1856) worked as a sculptor in Laxenburg

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Eduard Gurk (1801-1841), court draughtsman from Schönbrunn

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Antun Dominik Fernkorn (1813-1878) worked as a sculptor in Zagreb and Vienna

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Anton Kothgasser (1769-1851), Viennese painter, worked on contouring doors and windows.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Bartolomej Felbinger (1785-1871), Zagreb architect born in Bohemia. Educated in Vienna. From 1809 he worked in Zagreb as a city architect.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Maksimir Park in the period when most of the works were finished is presented in »Situations Plan des Seine exelenz den herrn Agramer Bischof Georg von Haulik« which in 1846 was put together by Baron Leonard Zornberg

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> M. and B. ŠĆITAROCI:, Gradski perivoji Hrvatske [City Gardens of Croatia], Zagreb, 2004, pp. 134-136

M. Slukan Altić - THE FORMATION OF PROMENADES AND PARKS IN ZAGREB

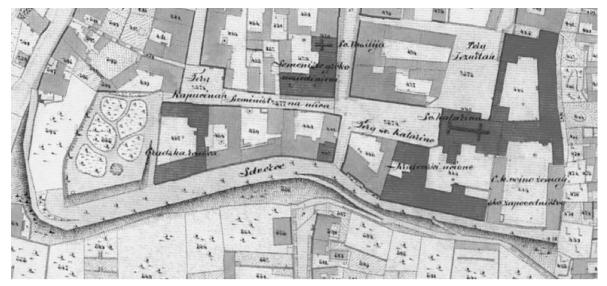


Figure 3 Southern Promenade (today's Promenade of Josip Juraj Strossmayer) on the cadastral map from 1862

was planted and benches were placed along with the street lamps and in the tower, which stood by the gate, a café was built<sup>15</sup>. The final promenade was realised on the basis of the voluntary contributions from citizens. All works were supervised by Bartolomej Flebinger who had previously worked on the arrangement of Maksimir.

A similar process occurred in 1841 on the city's northern wall. Immediately after the destruction of the northern town's gate (in 1838), along the outer edge of the walls the North Promenade (today's Vraz Promenade) was formed, along which were placed benches for walkers and in the tower, which stood along the north gate, a very popular café was built. The North Promenade was arranged at the initiative of Matthias Pallain, the owner of the mentioned café, who funded most of the work (the remaining money was raised by voluntary contributions). All works here were supervised by Bartolomej Felbinger.

These promenades were placed alongside the historical nucleus and immediately after their opening they became an important part of the social life of the city, especially for its elite, and at the same time clearly marking the border between the old town as the residence of the nobility and rich citizens and the suburb where the lower strata of residents lived.

#### The city parks as new social components of the city

Public green areas ceased to be a barrier between the social classes during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when in the Lower Town (Donji Grad, a former suburb) numerous spacious squares were organised<sup>16</sup>. The area of the future Lower Town as a space between the historic centre to the north and the railway to the south, was still poorly constructed city's outskirts. The first significant step towards the urbanization of the Lower Town was the arrangement of the square that had previously served as a cattle market (today's Trg Nikola Šubić Zrinski) according to the ideas of the then city engineer Rupert Melkus<sup>17</sup>. In 1873 this spacious square was formed into a municipal park from the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Four storey tower built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century known under the name »Lotrščak« today it is a city gallery.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> S. KNEŽEVIĆ, Zagrebačka zelena potkova [Zagreb's Green Horseshoe], Zagreb, 1996.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Rupert Melkus (1833-1891), an town.planner of Czech origin, graduated at the Polytechnic Institute in Vienna. From 1869 he worked as a city engineer in Zagreb, from 1882 to 1891 as head of the Municipal Building office. He had a key role in the townplanning map of Zagreb in 1887, in which the Green Horseshoe was designed.

carefully geometric arrangements to the horticultural areas to the solutions of Rudolph Siebeck<sup>18</sup>. So since then the plain marketplace has become one of the most representative of the city's squares. The aesthetic and cultural repercussion of such an arranged square was so strong that it was immediately followed by the construction of a number of prominent public buildings (Supreme Court - in 1878, District Court - 1878) on the edge of the park. After that in 1879 on the southern edge of the square the new grand building of the Academy of Sciences was built. Contemporary urban planners of Zagreb perceived the moving force which lay in the inflection of aesthetics of the city park and representative architecture, and it was decided to use it as a key element in shaping the future of the Lower Town as the city's centre.

In 1887 Zagreb received a new town planning document for the organisation of the Lower Town which for the first time includes the formation of spacious parks as representative stages for the building of new cultural, school and scientific institutions<sup>19</sup>. A list of seven connecting parks was planned which due to their characteristic ground plans within the Lower Town were named the »Green Horseshoe« and which today also represent one of the basic urban identities of Zagreb's Lower Town. The Green Horseshoe represents a three part structure: the Eastern park consisted of a series of three squares/city parks (the park in today's Trg Nikole Šubića Zrinskog arranged in 1873, Trg Josipa Jurja Strossmayera arranged as a park in 1884, the park at Trg Kralja Tomislava arranged in 1894), the Southern park is comprised of a park in front of the new railway station (arranged in 1891) and the Botanical Garden (in 1891) while in the Western park was made today's Trg Marka Marulića (arranged in 1914), Trg Ivana Mažuranića (in 1913) and today's Trg Maršala Tita (in 1895). The basic idea was that a number of parks, which framed the Lower Town on three sides, would in visual and health senses protect that part of the city from the pollution that came from the railroad tracks and industrial areas around the railway station. The conceptual idea of the Green Horseshoes as a system of city squares with park areas was taken up by the city engineer Rupert Melkus, one of Zagreb's first urban planners. It is interesting that for the realisation of the Green Horseshoe a detailed implementation plan was never made, nor was the tender announced for the design of individual parks done won the way«. For the successful implementation of the Green Horseshoe particularly deserving is city engineer Milan Lenuci, who in 1891 also headed the Municipal Building Office<sup>20</sup>. Both mentioned engineers, Rupert Melkus and Milan Lenuci, were educated in technical schools in Austria, applying their experiences of the planning of Austrian cities in the case of Zagreb.

The creation of the Green Horseshoe was directly inspired by urban undertakings in Vienna where after the deconstruction of its city walls (in 1857), in place of the walls the *Ringstrasse* was created, a circular road alongside which the most representative architectural, horticultural works and sculptures as well as artisans were placed. The Green Horseshoe was created in the period from 1887-1914 using the exact Vienna concept<sup>21</sup>. The role of the ring in Zagreb took on a series of squares/parks along which, at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, were built a series of representative public palaces in the classicist and secession styles, due to which the Lower Town

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Rudolph Siebeck (1802-1879), Vienna's famed landscape architect. Educated in Altenburg as a gardener and then in Leipzig, where he studied botany where he was employed as a city gardener. In 1878 he became a city gardener in Vienna where he worked on designing public parks.

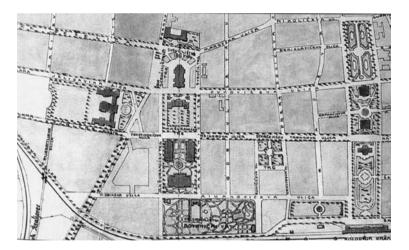
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> State Archive Zagreb, City Hall Collection, Architectural Department – »Obrazloženje regulatorne osnove grada Zagreba«, 1887.

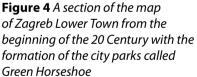
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Milan Lenuci (1849-1924), Croatian engineer and town-planner, finished technical high school in Graz. From 1874 he worked as a Zagreb surveyor and in 1891 as head of the Municipal Building Office. He was responsible for implementing the townplanning act from 1887 and the organisation of the Green Horseshoe (he personally participated in the arrangement of its southern and western gardens).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> S. MORAVANSZKY, Competing Visions. Aestetic Invention and Social Imagination in Central European Architecture 1867-1918, Cambridge, Massachusetts-London, 1997.

became not only the most prominent part of the city but, thanks to a number of public institutions that were built here, also took on the function of the city's centre<sup>22</sup>.

When designing the Green Horseshoe and its parks, as the main template the town building manual Der Städtebau by Josef Stübben (1890) was used. According to Stübben Zagreb's Green Horseshoe parks fall into the categories of Gartenplatz or Schmuckplatz and about whose purpose Stübben said<sup>23</sup>: »They are used mainly for the public's health, comfort and relaxation but are also the most pleasant decorations in our cities. They provide an opportunity for lazing on shady seats and in a stimulating environment, the enjoyment of some fresh plants, flowers and green meadows. Together with the promenades and parks the city residents were supplied with the natural beauty of a village; they ease the roughness and carefully nurture and educate the youth... The basic requirements for public health of body and soul are equally important as the requirements of traffic, construction and beauty. Respect to them demands from the creator of the plans of the city to supply the city of the future with green places for leisure in sufficient numbers and sizes, in the correct position and the correct settings. This duty is especially important as opposed to middle and lower strata of the population who are mainly housed in cramped apartments without gardens or some plants«. Hence, the importance of the park is not only for its aesthetic and cultural values, but also an emphasis on its social and health components. Therefore, the park is now no longer just for the higher strata, and it should accordingly be set up as a site accessible to all layers of inhabitants, and so a centre of the city. This applies to Zagreb, which was situated at the beginning of its industrial era<sup>24</sup>, and so parks of the Green Horseshoes can become a new arena of sociability, leisure, sport and entertainment, but in this time for the middle and lower strata of the population.





On the area of the Green Horseshoe until WWI these public institutions were built: the buildings of the Supreme Court and District Court (1878), Academy of Science and Art (1879), the building of the University of Zagreb (1882), railway station (1892), National Theatre (1895), the Art Pavilion (1898), the Museum of Arts and Crafts (1903), the Chamber of Commerce (1903) the building of the Royal Railway (1903), the University Library (1914), the Pharmacological Institute (1913). For more about it compare: Slukan Altić, Mirela: Morphological and functional change in Zagreb Lower Town (Donji grad) 1862-1914 based on cadastral sources. Prostor – znanstveni časopis za arhitekturu i urbanizam, Zagreb, vol. 14, no. 31, 2006, pp. 2-17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> J. STÜBBEN, Der Städtebau, 1890, pp. 152

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> The first industrial building in Zagreb was built in the year of the arrival of the railway in that city – in 1862.

#### Sažetak

Kao periferna zemlja Habsburške Monarhije, industrijska revolucija nije se značajnije odražavala na urbani razvoj hrvatskih gradova sve do druge polovice 19. stoljeća. Zbog kasnije pojave industrijalizacije, početak preobražaja grada u trenutku u kojem njegovo urbano tkivo izlazi iz srednjovjekovnih zidina tijekom 18. i 19. stoljeća, ogledalo se upravo u pokušaju ozelenjivanja grada. Ti su se procesi odvijali pod snažnim utjecajem europskih trendova i urbanističkih škola čiji se rukopisi mogu jasno isčitavati u svim projektima prvih zelenih površina hrvatskih gradova, a osobito grada Zagreba, kao tadašnje prijestolnice Kraljevine Hrvatske i Slavonije u sastavu Habsburške Monarhije. Opisano ispreplitanje europskih utjecaja rezultat je djelovanja mnoštva stranih inženjera u Hrvatskoj ali još više i činjenice da se većina zagrebačkih urbanista, arhitekata i parkovnih stručnjaka toga doba obrazovala se u Beču, Grazu i Munchenu.

Najstarija javna zelena površina u gradu Zagrebu uređena je izvan samog gradskog teritorija. Park Maksimir, nazvan po svojem osnivaču, biskupu Maksimilijanu Vrhovcu, nastao je uz istočnu gradsku među. Njegovo oblikovanje započinje 1787, upravo kada se u Munchenu uređuje n Englisher Garten, Park je uređivan postupno, od 1787, pa sve do 1867, a otvoren je za javnost već 1794. godine. Uređen je kao engleski park prema nacrtima koje je izradio Michael Riedel, vrtni arhitekt perivoja u bečkom Schönbrunnu.

Kao i u brojnim europskim gradovima, pojava prvih javnih zelenih površina u samom gradu i u Zagrebu je vezana uz procese rušenja gradskih bedema. Rušenjem dijela južnih zidina grada, 1812. godine Zagreb dobiva svoje prvo šetalište poznato kao Južna promenada a 1841. uz rub nekadašnjih sjevernih zidina, uređena je Sjeverna promenada. Ta su šetališta položena na rubu povijesne jezgre, odmah po svojem uređenju postali važna sastavnica društvenog života grada, osobito njegovih elita, ujedno jasno označavajući razgraničenje između starog grada kao rezidencije plemstva i bogatih građana te podgrađa u kojem žive niži slojevi stanovništva.

Javne zelene površine prestaju biti klasnom barijerom tek u drugoj polovici 19. stoljeća kada se i u Donjem gradu (bivšem podgrađu) uređuju prostrani javni parkovi. Godine 1887. Zagreb dobiva novu regulatornu osnovu za uređenje Donjeg grada koja po prvi puta predviđa uređenje prostranih parkova kao reprezentativne pozornice uz koju bi se izgradile nove kulturne, školske i znanstvene institucije. Tako je projektiran slijed od čak devet međusobno povezanih parkova koji su zbog karakterističnog tlocrta unutar Donjeg grada dobili zajednički naziv Zelena potkova a koja i danas čini jedan od temeljnih urbanističkih identiteta zagrebačkog Donjeg grada. Oblikovanje Zelene potkove direktno je inspirirana urbanističkim zahvatima u Beču u kojem nakon rušenja njegovih zidina (1857.), na mjestu zidina nastaje Ringstrasse, prsten uz koji se nižu najreprezentativnija dostignuća arhitekture, hortikulture, kiparstva i umjetničkog obrta. Zelena potkova oblikovana u razdoblju od 1877. do 1914. slobodno je primijenjen koncept upravo bečkog prstena u uz to kojem nazire i niz rješenja ponuđenih u temeljnom priručniku gradogradnje *Stadtebau* Joseph Stübbena (1890.).

Na temelju navedenog, u radu su analizirani fizička forma, lokacija i društvena uloga zagrebačkih zelenih površina oblikovanih tijekom 18. i 19. stoljeća, objašnjeni povijesni konteksti njihova nastanka te razmotreni njihovi europski uzori.

# Ekonomska i ekohistorija Economic- and Ecohistory

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#### PRIKAZI KNJIGA

Gyulai Eva, Horvath Zita, Turbuly Eva, Gospodarstvo i društvo međimurskog vlastelinstva u 17-18. stoljeću	
(Andreja Talan)	140
Joan Dunayer, Specizam, Diskriminacija na osnovi vrste (Tomislav Krznar)	142
Podravina, Časopis za multidisciplinarna istraživanja, vol. IX, broj 17 (Tomislav Krznar)	145
Podravina, Časopis za multidisciplinarna istraživanja, vol. IX, broj 18 (Tomislav Krznar)	148
Tomislav Krznar, Bioetički mozaik (Hrvoje Jurić)	150
Ian G. Simmons, Globalna povijest okoliša: od 10000. pr. Kr. do 2000. n. Kr. (Aleksandra Đurić)	151
J. Donald Hughes, Što je povijest okoliša? (Aleksandra Đurić)	154
Zapisnik franjevačkog samostana u Našicama. Knjiga I (1739. – 1787.) (Danijel Patafta)	156
Slaven Bertoša, Osebujno mjesto austrijske Istre: Lupoglavski kraj u srednjem i novom vijeku (Igor Eterović)	158
Radovi Zavoda za znanstveni rad u Varaždinu, br. 22 (Iva Potočnik)	161
Historia Varasdiensis. Časopis za varaždinsku povjesnicu br. 1 (Iva Potočnik)	162
Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, br. 42 (Igor Razum)	163
Prostorno planiranje u Jugoistočnoj Europi (Do Drugog svetskog rata) (Marko Šarić)	165
Molve - ljudi, selo i okoliš u dugom trajanju, društvo za povjesnicu i starine (Dragutin Feletar)	168
ZNANSTVENI SKUPOVI	170
UPUTE SURADNICIMA / INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS	179

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